



ALAMEDA COUNTY CONGESTION MANAGEMENT AGENCY

1333 BROADWAY, SUITE 220 • OAKLAND, CA 94612 • PHONE: (510) 836-2560 • FAX: (510) 836-2185
E-MAIL: mail@accma.ca.gov • WEB SITE: accma.ca.gov

Memorandum

*July 13, 2009
Agenda Item 7.1*

Date: July 2, 2009

To: **Sunol Express Lane Joint Powers Authority**

From: Ray Akkawi, Manager of Project Delivery

Subject: I-680 Express Lane Project: Concept of Operations- Level of Service in the Express Lane

Assembly Bill (AB) 2032, the bill that authorized the HOT Lanes, requires the HOT lane to maintain an operational level of service (LOS) C. This LOS requirement means that the facility must operate at 60+ mph on average and not at the optimum speed of 45 mph. A discussion at the regional level to develop a concept of operations of the Express Lanes recommended amending AB 2032 to allow operating the lane at the optimum speed. The attached Level Of Service report provides an overview of AB 2032 requirement and the proposed legislation changes.

I-680 Express Lanes Level of Service Status Report

Overview

When AB 2032 was working its way through the State Legislature, an amendment was made that added the following:

Implementation of the program shall ensure that Level of Service C, as measured by the most recent issue of the Highway Capacity Manual, as adopted by the Transportation Research Board, is maintained at all times in the high-occupancy vehicle lanes, except that subject to a written agreement between the department and the administering agency that is based on operating conditions of the high-occupancy vehicle lane, Level of Service of Service D shall be permitted on the high-occupancy vehicle lanes.

This LOS requirement means that the facility must operate at 60+ mph on average. This requirement means that the lane will not operate optimally; optimization of throughput occurs at an average speed of about 45 mph. For this reason, the requirement will reduce the number of vehicles permitted in the lane and subsequently revenue.

Most other HOT lanes in the United States are governed by a requirement similar to that included in SAFETEA-LU:

“degraded facility – an HOV facility is considered degraded if vehicles operating on it are failing to maintain a minimum average operating speed 90% of the time over a consecutive 180-day period during morning and/or evening weekday peak hours. (minimum average operating speed is defined as 45 mph in a 50-mph zone, or 10 mph below limit when limit is less than 50 mph)...

SB 1422, which permits the LAMTA to implement HOT lanes, provides the MTA with the ability to “establish appropriate traffic flow guidelines for the purpose of ensuring optimal use of the express lanes...”

AB744

BATA’s current bill incorporates that same language as applied by AB2032. The staffs from BATA, Caltrans and the ACCMA agree that this is not the best way to help measure the performance of the lane. The LOS calculation is based upon speed and the number of vehicles in the lane, which makes it difficult to explain to customers. A simple speed criterion, such as that included in SAFETEA-LU would make for easier communication and practical justification to customers.

Next Steps

The proposed legislation will not be amended by BATA unless amendments are proposed by legislators, because the current language seems acceptable to those legislators familiar with it. Should amendments be proposed, BATA may pursue a “correction” from the LOS criteria to a speed criterion.